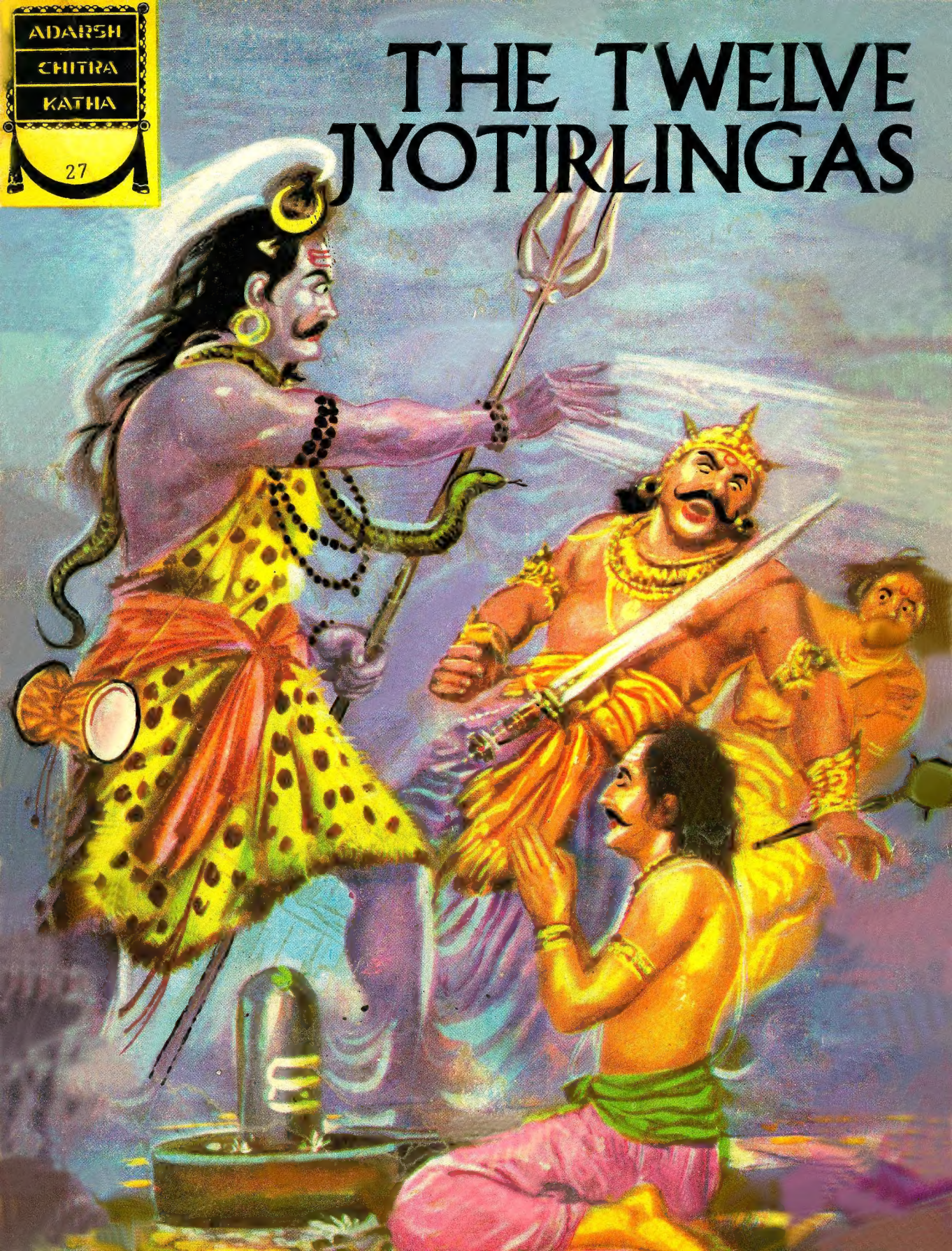
ADARSH CHITRA KATHA

27

THE TWELVE JYOTIRLINGAS



Most of us have, in our travels from north to south or east to west of our country, come across various Shiva temples. Some are quite old and famous temples while others are of more recent origin. Some temples are huge and imposing while others are small *Shivalayas,* tucked away in some hill or glade. Of these numerous Shiva temples, there are twelve which are considered as the most important by the devotees of Lord Shiva. These are called the Twelve Jyotirlingas.

All these Jyotirlingas are considered to be especially holy and it is said in the scriptures, that having their *darshan* will free man from all his shackles and personality limitations and lift him into greater ambits of contemplation upon the divine nature of the Lord.

Here are the stories of the origin of these Jyotirlingas where Lord Shiva is said to have blessed his devotees and taken up his abode at their request and for the benefit of all mankind.

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OUR NEXT TITLE :

THE DOVE AND THE HUNTER

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SOMNATHESHWAR

SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS AGO, CHANDRA (MOON) WAS WEDDED TO THE TWENTY-SEVEN DAUGHTERS OF PRAJAPATI DAKSHA.

THEY WERE ALL VIRTUOUS AND BEAUTIFUL MAIDENS, BUT CHANDRA LOVED ROHINI THE MOST.

THE OTHERS NATURALLY BECAME JEALOUS AND ONE DAY THEY WENT TO THEIR FATHER.

O, FATHER, WE ARE VERY UNHAPPY. CHANDRA PAYS NO ATTENTION TO US.

HE HAS EYES ONLY FOR ROHINI. WHAT IS THE USE OF BEING MARRIED TO A PERSON WHO DOESN'T NOTICE YOU AT ALL?

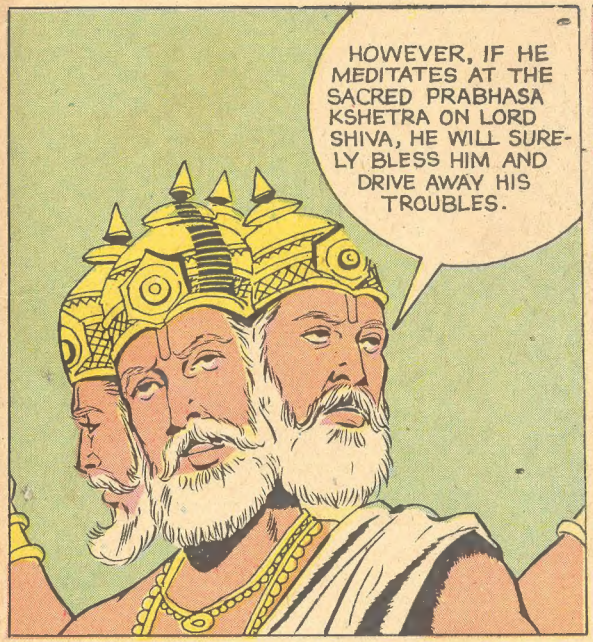
DAKSHA WAS QUITE UPSET TO SEE HIS DAUGHTERS UNHAPPY. HE WENT TO CHANDRA.

SON, YOU BELONG TO A GOOD AND NOBLE FAMILY. YOUR BEHAVIOUR SHOULD NOT BRING DISGRACE TO IT.

DO YOU THINK IT IS RIGHT TO FAVOUR ONE WIFE AND NEGLECT THE OTHERS?

THINK OVER WHAT I HAVE SAID AND CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE.

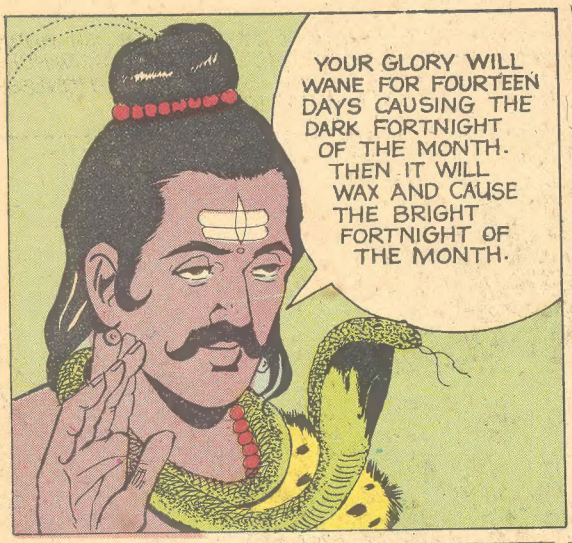
IT IS A WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT WE CANNOT LOVE EVERYONE EQUALLY. BUT IN THE OLDEN DAYS, SOCIAL CONDUCT WAS VERY STRICT. A PERSON WITH SEVERAL WIVES WAS DUTY-BOUND TO BE IMPARTIAL.
BUT CHANDRA CONTINUED TO VIOLATE THE LAWS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR. THIS MADE DAKSHA VERY ANGRY.
O CHANDRA-DEVA! I HAVE BEEN PATIENT WITH YOU AND EXPLAINED HOW YOU SHOULD BEHAVE. BUT YOU HAVE IGNORED MY WORDS.
FOR THIS MISCONDUCT OF YOURS, YOUR COUNTENANCE WILL BECOME SULLIED AND BLEMISHED. YOUR GLORY IN THIS WORLD WILL SLOWLY WANE AND FINALLY DISAPPEAR!
WHAT A TERRIBLE CURSE! CHANDRA WAS ASHAMED AND MISERABLE. THE DEVAS BECAME AGITATED AND HELD A MEETING.
HOW WILL THERE BE COOL, SOOTHING NIGHTS WITHOUT THE LIGHT OF THE MOON?
AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK, MEN RELAX IN THE MELLOW LIGHT OF THE MOON. WITHOUT THE MOON, MANKIND WILL BE DEPRIVED OF A GREAT BLESSING.
THEY ALL WENT TO BRAHMA, THE CREATOR. BUT BRAHMA WAS UNSYMPATHETIC.
CHANDRA IS ARROGANT AND INDISCIPLINED. THE CURSE IS RICHLY DESERVED BY HIM.

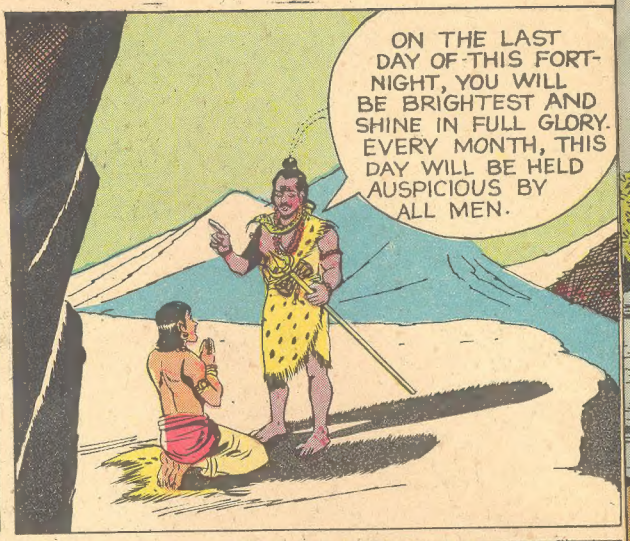

HOWEVER, IF HE MEDITATES AT THE SACRED PRABHASA KSHETRA ON LORD SHIVA, HE WILL SURELY BLESS HIM AND DRIVE AWAY HIS TROUBLES.

SO WITH FAITH AND HOPE IN HIS HEART, CHANDRA WENT TO PRABHASA KSHETRA TO DO PENANCE. FOR SIX MONTHS HE SAT STILL AND MOTIONLESS IN HIS SEAT OF MEDITATION.

LORD SHIVA WAS PLEASED WITH HIS STEADFASTNESS.
ASK OF ME ANY BOON, O CHANDRA. I AM HAPPY WITH YOU!

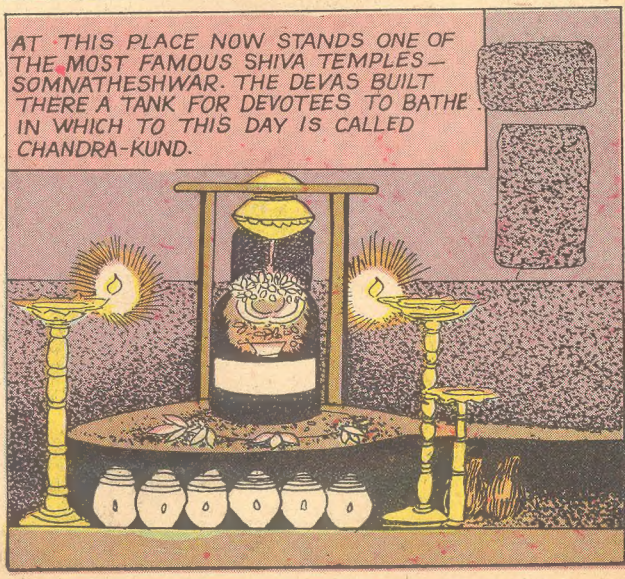
CHANDRA'S VOICE BECAME CHOKED WITH EMOTION.
LORD, I IMPLORE YOU TO RESTORE MY GLORY, FOR MAN SUFFERS WITHOUT IT.
YOU HAVE ASKED WELL, CHANDRA. BUT I SHALL ONLY MODIFY DAKSHA'S CURSE. I WILL NOT NULLIFY IT.


YOUR GLORY WILL WANE FOR FOURTEEN DAYS CAUSING THE DARK FORTNIGHT OF THE MONTH. THEN IT WILL WAX AND CAUSE THE BRIGHT FORTNIGHT OF THE MONTH.


ON THE LAST DAY OF THIS FORTNIGHT, YOU WILL BE BRIGHTEST AND SHINE IN FULL GLORY. EVERY MONTH, THIS DAY WILL BE HELD AUSPICIOUS BY ALL MEN.

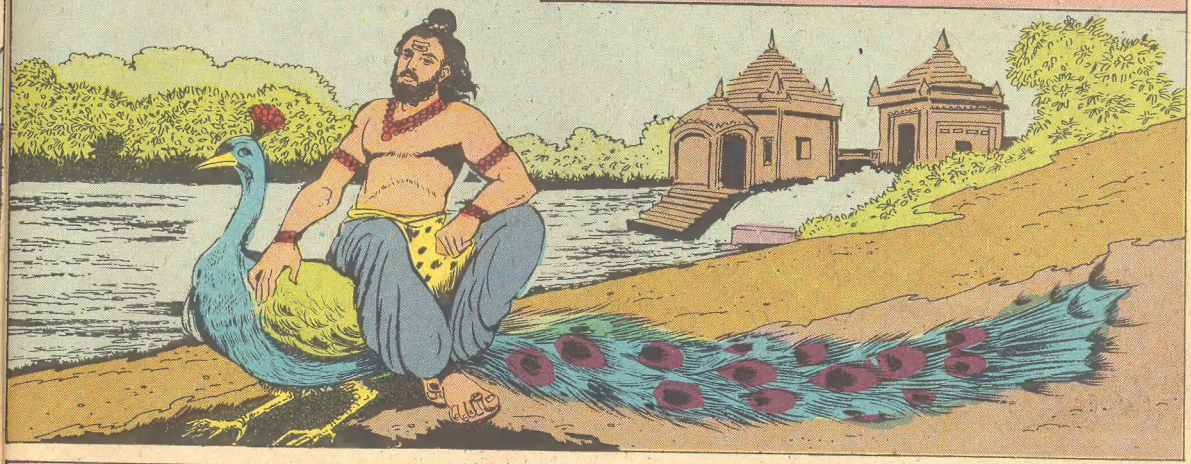
YOUR COUNTENANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE BLEMISHED. BUT MEN WILL CONSIDER YOU EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL, THUS YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BLESS MANKIND.

O SHIVA. TO COMMEMORATE THIS EVENT, WE REQUEST YOU TO TAKE UP YOUR ABODE HERE.


AT THIS PLACE NOW STANDS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS SHIVA TEMPLES— SOMNATHESHWAR. THE DEVAS BUILT THERE A TANK FOR DEVOTEES TO BATHE IN WHICH TO THIS DAY IS CALLED CHANDRA-KUND.

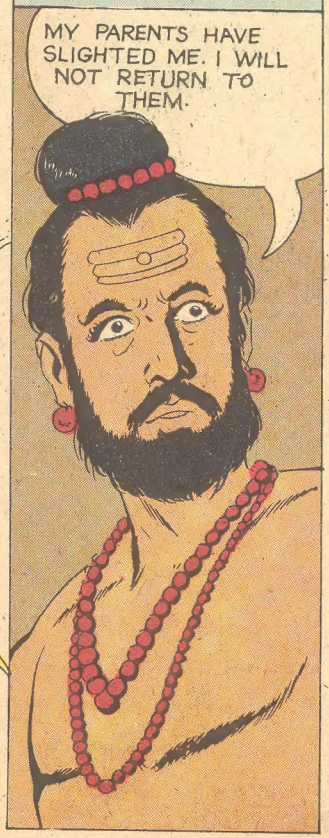
MALLIKARJUNA

SWAMI KARTIKEYA, THE SON OF SHIVA AND PARVATI, ONCE WENT ON A CIRCUMAMBULATION AROUND THE WORLD. HE VISITED ALL THE HOLY PLACES AND PLACES KNOWN FOR THEIR SCENIC BEAUTY.

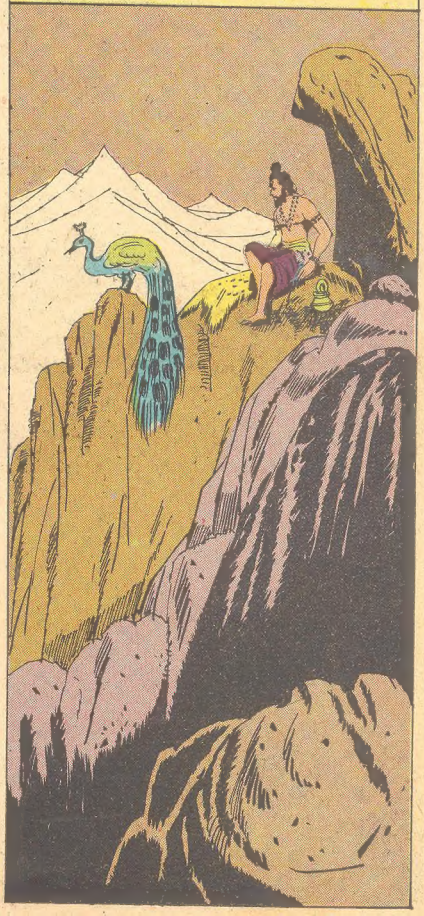


WHEN HE WAS RETURNING TO KAILASH.

NARADA HAD SOWN ONE OF HIS MISCHIEVOUS SEEDS! BUT HE DOES SO ONLY WHEN HE KNOWS ITS OUTCOME WILL BE GOOD.



SO KARTIKEYA WENT TO A MOUNTAIN CALLED KRAUNCHA AND STARTED LIVING THERE.



IN KAILASH...

MY LORD! I CANNOT BEAR THIS ANNOYANCE OF KARTIKEYA.

YES, PARVATI. HIS ABSENCE TROUBLES ME TOO. LET US GO TO KRAUNCHA AND PERSUADE HIM TO RETURN.

SO SHIVA AND PARVATI SET OFF FOR KRAUNCH.

SWAMI KARTIKEYA! LORD SHIVA AND PARVATI ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE!

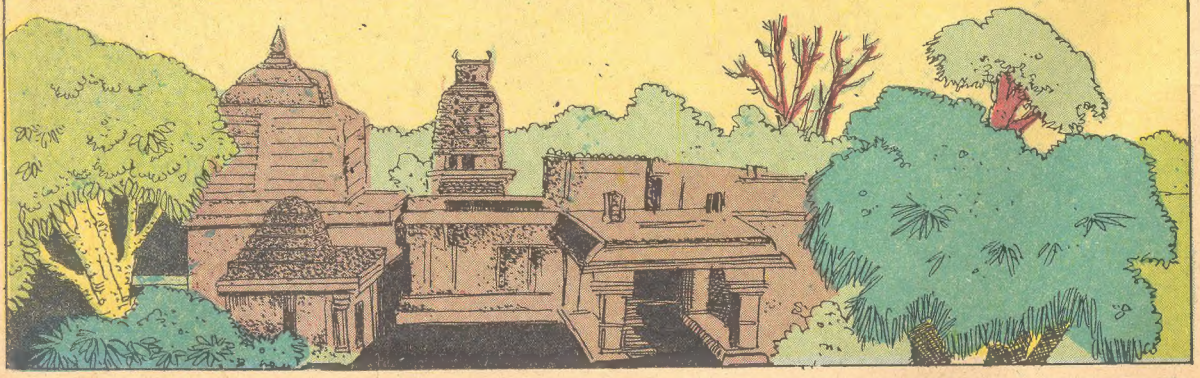
NO! I WILL LEAVE THIS PLACE AND GO A HUNDRED YOJANAS AWAY!

WE ALL DO THIS, DO WE NOT, WHEN WE WANT OUR PARENTS TO COME AFTER US.

KARTIKEYA HAS GONE!

NOW I WON'T RUN AFTER HIM. I WILL WAIT HERE TILL HE RETURNS.

SO SHIVA TURNED HIMSELF INTO A JYOTIRLINGA CALLED MALLIKARJUNA. PEOPLE WHO VISIT SRI-SAILAM CAN STILL HAVE DARSHAN OF A FATHER WAITING FOR HIS SON'S RETURN.



MAHAKALESHWAR

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS AN ANCIENT CITY CALLED AVANTIKA. HERE LIVED FOUR GOOD AND HONEST BROTHERS CALLED DEVAPRIYA, MEDHAPRIYA, SUKRTA AND DHARMABAHU, WHO WERE ALL DEVOTEES OF LORD SHIVA.

OM NAMAH SIVAYA !

ON A MOUNTAIN TOP THERE LIVED A TERRIBLE RAKSHASA CALLED DOOSHANA. HE PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCE AND WAS BLESSED BY LORD BRAHMA.

MAY YOU BE BLESSED WITH IMMENSE STRENGTH AND POWER!

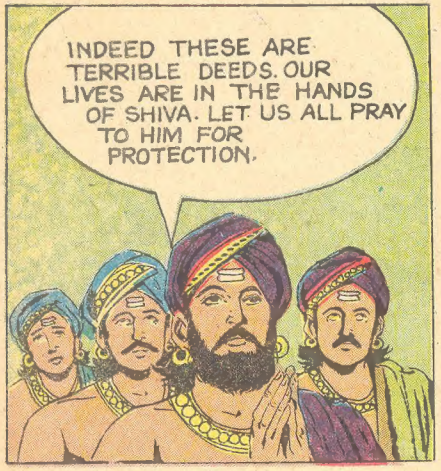
DOOSHANA BECAME AN ARROGANT TYRANT. HE TROUBLED GOOD PEOPLE AND DESTROYED PROPERTY. DURING HIS ROUNDS OF DESTRUCTION, HE CAME TO AVANTIKA.

HE SUMMONED HIS EVIL RAKSHASAS TO HIM...

I HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO SUBDUE THOSE SHIVA-BHAKTAS. IF THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT ME AS MASTER, GO AND DESTROY THEM!

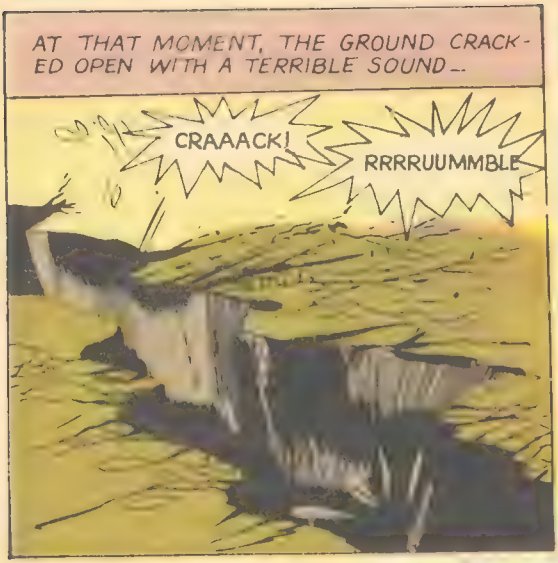
THE DEMONS STARTED TERRORISING EVERYONE THEY CAME ACROSS. PEOPLE BECAME STRUCK WITH FEAR. THEY WENT TO THE FOUR BROTHER.

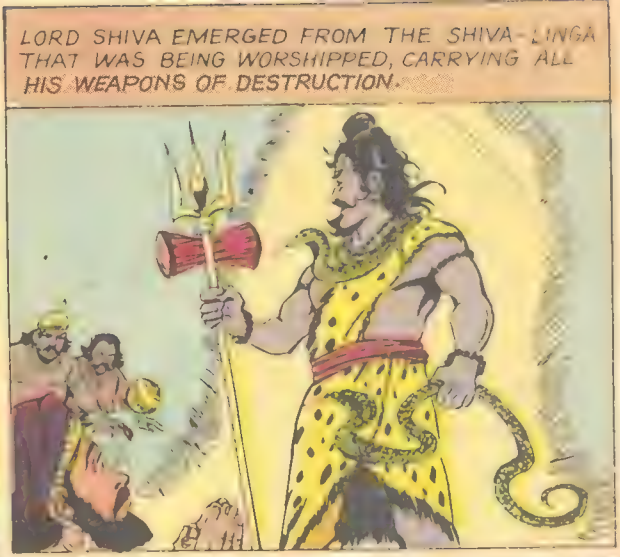
O MAHATMAS! PLEASE PROTECT US. THEY ARE DESTROYING OUR HOUSES AND CROPS.
THEY ARE KILLING EVEN OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.


INDEED THESE ARE TERRIBLE DEEDS. OUR LIVES ARE IN THE HANDS OF SHIVA. LET US ALL PRAY TO HIM FOR PROTECTION.

HERE THEY ARE, THESE SHIVA-WORSHIPPERS. KILL THEM! DESTROY THEM!

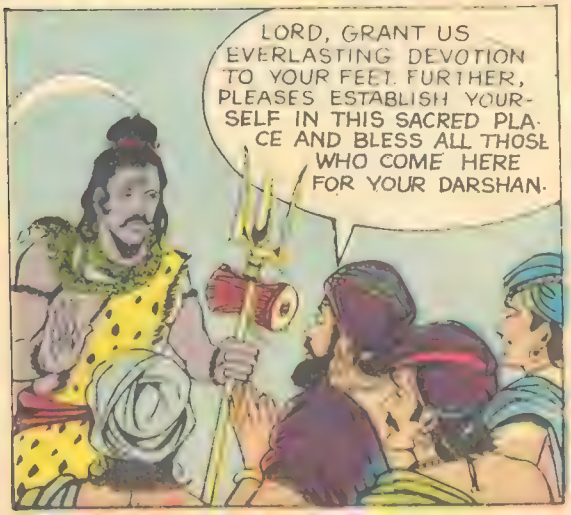
THE RAKSHASAS HAD BEEN JOINED BY THEIR MASTER, DOOSHANA. BUT THE BROTHERS, ALONG WITH OTHERS, CONTINUED WITH THEIR WORSHIP.

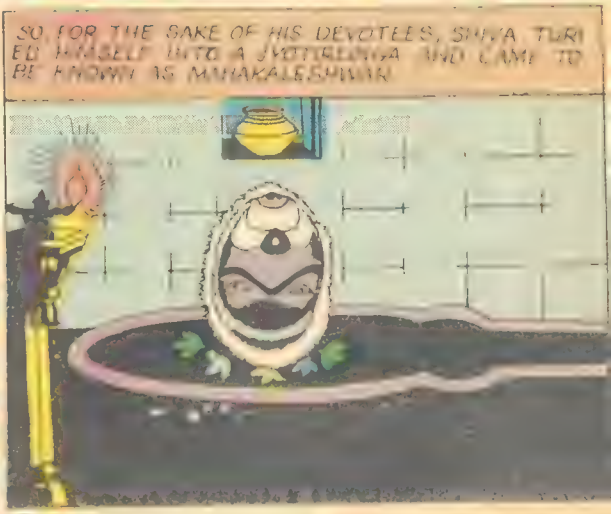

AT THAT MOMENT, THE GROUND CRACKED OPEN WITH A TERRIBLE SOUND--
CRAAACK!
RRRRUUMMBLE


LORD SHIVA EMERGED FROM THE SHIVA-LINGA THAT WAS BEING WORSHIPPED, CARRYING ALL HIS WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION.

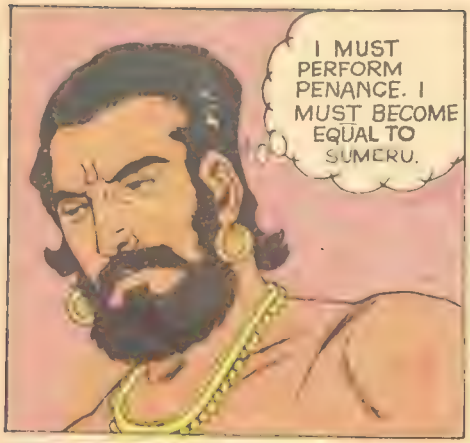
HE UTTERED A TERRIFYING CRY.
GRAARGH!

SUCH WAS ITS EFFECT, THAT DOOSHANA AND HIS FOLLOWERS IMMEDIATELY DROPPED DOWN DEAD!


LORD, GRANT US EVERLASTING DEVOTION TO YOUR FEET. FURTHER, PLEASES ESTABLISH YOURSELF IN THIS SACRED PLACE AND BLESS ALL THOSE WHO COME HERE FOR YOUR DARSHAN.


SO, FOR THE SAKE OF HIS DEVOTEES, SHIVA TURNED HIMSELF INTO A JYOTIRLINGA AND CAME TO BE KNOWN AS MAHAKALESHWAR.

OMKARESHWAR
LONG AGO, NARADA PERFORMED PENANCE AND TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN THE VINDHYACHALA MOUNTAINS.
VINDHYA WAS OVERWHELMED WITH THIS HONOUR AND THINKS SO THAT THE GREAT MUNI HAS BLESSED HIM WITH HIS DIVINE PRESENCE.
HOW GREAT IS MY FORTUNE! HOW LUCKY I AM!
NARADA WILL NOT GO TO ANY ORDINARY MOUNTAIN. HE HAS CHOSEN ME ABOVE EVEN THE MIGHTY HIMALAYA!
MAHAMUNI, YOUR PRESENCE HERE INDICATES THAT MY GREATNESS IS UNEQUALLED AMONG MOUNTAINS
INDEED, IT IS O VINDHYA. BUT MOUNT SUMERU IS GREATER THAN YOU ARE. IN FACT, I AM ON MY WAY THERE
AND NARADA LEFT, PLUNGING VINDHYA IN GREAT SORROW.


I MUST PERFORM PENANCE. I MUST BECOME EQUAL TO SUMERU.

SO VINDHYA WENT TO A PLACE CALLED OMKAR AND
OM NAMAH SHIVAYA !

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS...
ASK WHAT YOU WILL, IT WILL BE GRANTED.

PURIFY MY INTELLECT, O LORD AND FILL IT WITH AUSPICIOUS THOUGHTS

SO BE IT !
REMAIN HERE AT THIS BLESSED SPOT, O LORD, THAT GOOD PEOPLE MAY WORSHIP YOU.

THIS JYOTIRLINGA CAME TO BE KNOWN AS OMKAR SHIVAR AND IS AN IMPORTANT PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE.

KEDARESHWAR
THEIR DUAL FORMS OF NARA AND NARAYANA, ONCE MADE AN EARTHERN SHIVA-LINGA IN THE HIMALAYAS AND SAT DOWN TO WORSHIP IT.
EVERY DAY, WHEN THEY BEGAN THEIR WORSHIP, THEY INVOKED THE GRACE OF SHIVA AND FIXED THEIR MINDS IN MEDITATION
OM NAMAH SHIVAYA!
THUS PASSED MANY DAYS SHIVA WAS PLEASED WITH THEIR WORSHIP.
WHAT BOON WILL YOU HAVE?
LORD OF THE DEVAS. IF YOU ARE REALLY PLEASED, RESIDE HERE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MANKIND, FOR THIS SPOT HAS BECOME DOUBLY BLESSED BY YOUR ACTUAL PRESENCE.
THIS IS THE FAMOUS KEDARESHWAR TEMPLE IN THE HIMALAYAS. TO THIS DAY PEOPLE CONSIDER THEMSELVES SINGULARLY BLESSED IF THEY CAN MAKE A PILGRIMAGE THERE.

BHEEMASHANKAR
THERE ONCE LIVED A RAKSHASA CALLED BHEEMA, WHO WAS THE SON OF RAVANA'S BROTHER, KUMBHAKARNA.
ONE DAY–
MOTHER, WHERE IS MY FATHER? WHY DO WE LIVE HERE ALONE?
SON, YOUR FATHER, THE MIGHTY KUMBHA-KARNA, WAS KILLED BY RAMA, AN INCARNATION OF VISHNU. SINCE THEN, I AM LIVING HERE ALONE ON THIS MOUNTAIN WITH YOU.
THIS ENRAGED BHEEMA SWORE TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH. HE DID SEVERE PENANCE AND PLEASED BRAHMA.
GO MY SON. YOU WILL BE ALL-POWERFUL

THUS STARTED A TIME OF TERROR. HE INVADED INDRA AND THE OTHER DEVAS AND DROVE THEM AWAY FROM THEIR ABODE.
GUGAAAAAAGH!
THE LORD PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE, INDRA, WAS DEFEATED. NOW HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO EARTH.
ON THE EARTH, THERE LIVED A GOOD AND VIRTUOUS KING CALLED SUDAKSHINA. BHEEMA HAD HIM ARRESTED AND THROWN INTO A DUNGEON.
I AM THE ONLY LORD HERE. JUST REMEMBER THAT!
BUT IN PRISON, KING SUDAKSHINA FASHIONED A SHIVA-LINGA OUT OF MUD AND STARTED WORSHIPPING IT
OM NAMAH SHIVAYA!

O POWERFUL ONE! THE KING IS PERFORMING RITUALS FOR YOR DESTRUCTION
THIS INFURIATED BHEEMA SWORD DRAWN, HE ADVANCED UPON THE LINGA TO DESTROY IT
THIS IS THE LAST TIME HE DOES IT.
BUT FROM THE LINGA, LORD SHIVA EMERGED IN A SUPREMELY GLORIOUS FORM. HERE TOO, HE UTTERED A FEARFUL CRY HEARING WHICH ALL THE DEMONS DROPPED DOWN DEAD.
RRRRRRRAAAAAAGH!
THE DEVAS SHOWERED FLOWERS ON THE LINGA.
LORD, LET THIS SPOT BECOME VENERATED BY YOUR PRESENCE.
SHIVA COMPLIED WITH THEIR REQUEST AND IS WORSHIPPED HERE AS THE BHEEMA-SHANKAR JYOTIRLINGA.

VISHVESHWAR

AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, THE ONE PARAMESHWAR* DESIRED TO BECOME THE MANY. HE SPLIT HIMSELF AND BECAME PURUSHA (SPIRIT) AND PRAKRITI (MATTER). THEN THERE WAS A VOICE FROM THE HEAVENS.

BOTH OF YOU SHOULD PERFORM PENANCE. ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE ABLE TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL WORLD.

PURUSHA AND AKRITI WERE BEWILDERED.

BUT WHERE WE TO SIT FOR PRICE? THERE IS NO PLACE FOR US TO DO PRICE.

A BEAUTIFUL CITY, FIVE KOSAS LONG (PANCHAKROSHI OR SIMPLY KASHI AS IT IS KNOWN TODAY), WAS THEN CREATED FOR THEM. WHEN LORD VISHNU BEHELD ITS BEAUTY, HE SHOOK HIS HEAD IN DISBELIEF ..A JEWEL FROM HIS EAR FELL DOWN ON A SPOT WHICH TODAY IS KNOWN AS MANIKARNIK.

FOR THEIR WORSHIP, SHIVA CAME AND RESIDED HERE AS THE AVIMUKTA LINGA.

THIS JYOTIRLINGA, KNOWN AS VISHVESHWAR, IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS TEMPLES IN INDIA. THE CITY ITSELF IS SUPPOSED TO BE IMPERISHABLE, AS IT IS FIRMLY ANCHORED BY THE TRIDENT OF LORD SHIVA.

TRYAMBAKESHWAR

MANY, MANY YEARS AGO, THERE LIVED ON THE BRAHMAGIRI MOUNTAIN, A NOBLE SAGE CALLED GAUTAMA, WITH HIS VIRTUOUS WIFE, AHALYA.

THEY WERE BOTH CONSTANTLY ENGAGED IN PERFORMING AUSTERITIES.

ONCE, THERE WERE NO RAINS FOR SEVERAL YEARS. ALL LIVING CREATURES WERE MISERABLE.

GAUTAMA THEN DID PENANCE FOR MANY YEARS AND PLEASED THE LORD OF WATER, VARUNA.

WHAT IS IT YOU WISH?

WATER, LORD. WITHOUT WATER THIS CREATION WILL PERISH.

VARUNA BADE HIM DIG A HOLE IN THE GROUND. WHEN IT WAS ONE HAND DEEP__

I WILL FILL THIS WITH A DIVINE SPRING OF WATER WHICH SHALL HAVE NO END

SOON AFTER, FIELDS OF GRAIN BECAME GREEN AGAIN AND ANIMALS REGAINED THEIR STRENGTH AND VIGOUR. THERE WAS PROSPERITY EVERYWHERE AND PEOPLE KNEW HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT ONCE AGAIN. AHALYA AND GAUTAMA WERE BOTH HAPPY THAT THEIR PENANCE HAD BORNE FRUIT.

BUT THERE WAS A GROUP OF WOMEN WHO BECAME JEALOUS OF AHALYA. THEY WENT TO THEIR HUSBANDS.

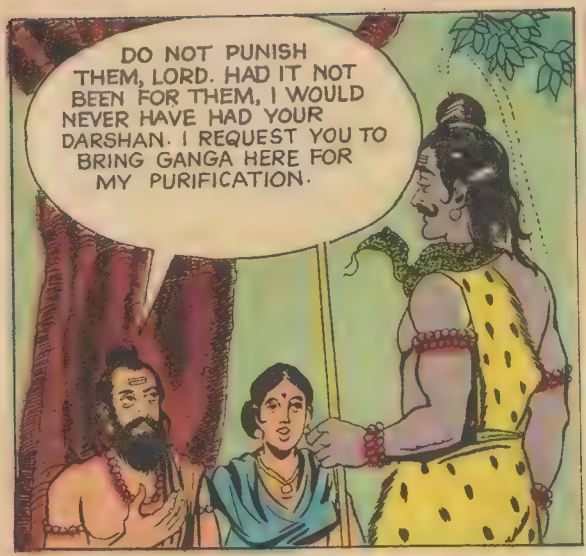
WE DO NOT LIKE AHALYA. SHE AND HER HUSBAND MUST BE DRIVEN AWAY FROM HERE.

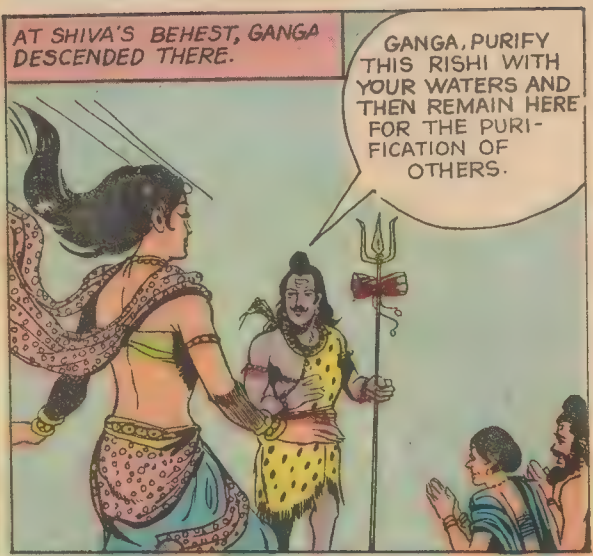
THEIR HUSBANDS WERE EVILMINDED ASCETICS. THEY DID PENANCE AND INVOKED LORD GANESHA.

LORD, WE WANT TO GET RID OF GAUTAMA. YOU MUST HELP US.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN WRONGLY. GAUTAMA AND AHALYA ARE GOOD AND VIRTUOUS. ASK ANOTHER BOON. YOU WONT? VERY WELL THEN. YOUR WISH WILL COME TO PASS, BUT YOU WILL REGRET HAVING TROUBLED A GOOD MAN.

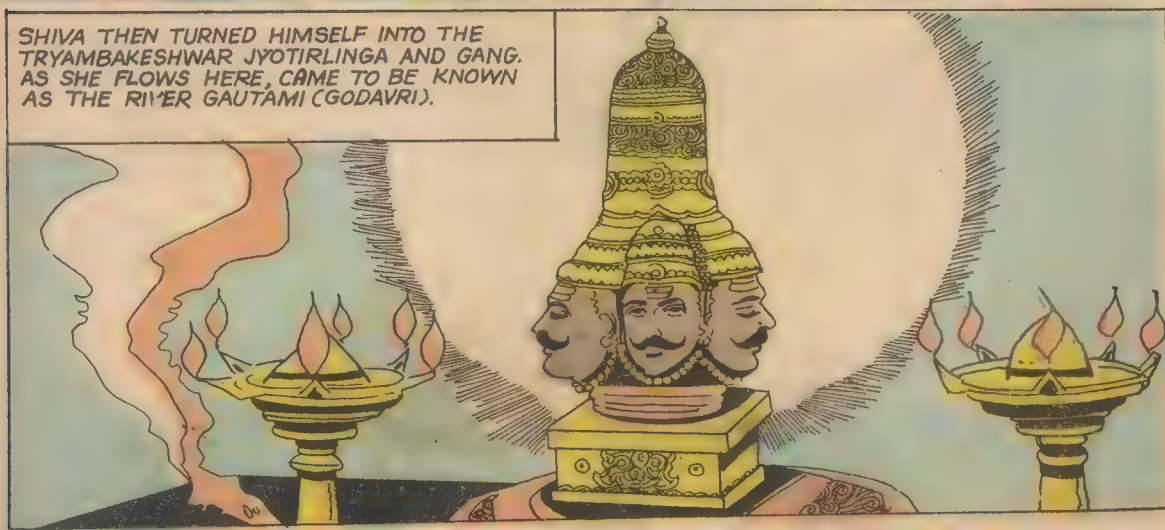
AND THEN A STRANGE EVENT TOOK PLACE. IN THE FOREST, GAUTAMA CAME UPON AN UNDER-FED COW. HE WENT TO OFFER HER SOME GRASS AND STROKED HER BACK WITH A BLADE OF GRASS....
YOU POOR THING. YOU LOOK HUNGRY TO ME. HERE IS SOME FRESH GREEN GRASS.
...WHEREUPON SHE PROMPTLY FELL DOWN DEAD!
GAUTAMA WAS HORRIFIED. HE AND HIS WIFE WERE DRIVEN OUT OF THE FOREST BY THE ASCETICS AND THEIR WIVES.
COW-KILLER! IT IS A SIN FOR US TO EVEN LOOK AT YOU!
GO AWAY! GET OUT OF THIS FOREST!
THEY WENT TO LIVE IN ANOTHER FOREST THERE THE BRAHMINS ENJOINED HIM TO PERFORM SEVERE PENANCE FOR PURIFICATION.
AFTER YOUR PENANCE, PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND ASK FOR GANGA TO COME HERE. ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE PURIFIED.
THE HARDSHIP AND PENANCE OF GAUTAMA AND AHALYA WERE SOON REWARDED.
O MUNI, I AM GREATLY MOVED BY YOU PERSEVERENCE AND DEVOTION. HOWEVER, YOUR DETRACTORS WILL HAVE TO BE PUNISHED FOR ALL THE TROUBLE THEY HAVE SUBJECTED YOU TO.


DO NOT PUNISH THEM, LORD. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THEM, I WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD YOUR DARSHAN. I REQUEST YOU TO BRING GANGA HERE FOR MY PURIFICATION.


AT SHIVA'S BEHEST, GANGA DESCENDED THERE.
GANGA, PURIFY THIS RISHI WITH YOUR WATERS AND THEN REMAIN HERE FOR THE PURIFICATION OF OTHERS.

I WILL, MY LORD, ON ONE CONDITION – ALONG WITH PARVATI, YOU MUST REMAIN HERE WITH ME.

SO BE IT!


SHIVA THEN TURNED HIMSELF INTO THE TRYAMBAKESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA AND GANG. AS SHE FLOWS HERE, CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE RIVER GAUTAMI (GODAVRI).

VAIDYANATHESHWAR

RAVANA, THE KING OF RAKSHASAS AND SCION OF THE PULASTYA FAMILY, ONCE BETOOK HIMSELF TO MOUNT KAILASH FOR SEVERE PENANCE. BUT HE COULD NOT PLEASE SHIVA.

OM NAMAH SHIVAYA!

SO HE CAME SOUTH OF THE HIMALAYAS AND STARTED A DIFFERENT KIND OF PENANCE. IN SUMMER HE LIT A BLAZING FIRE AND WITH THE FIERCE SUN OVERHEAD, CONTEMPLATED ON THE LORD.

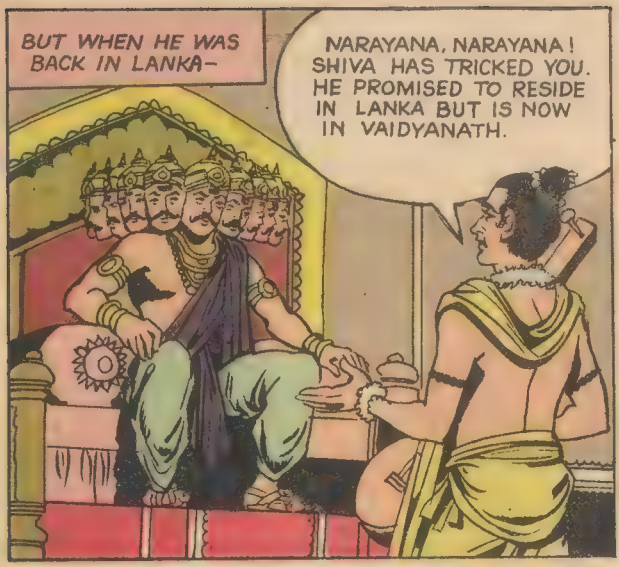
DURING THE MONSOON, HE BRAVED THE THUNDER AND STORM AND STOOD RESOLUTELY IN THE RAIN....

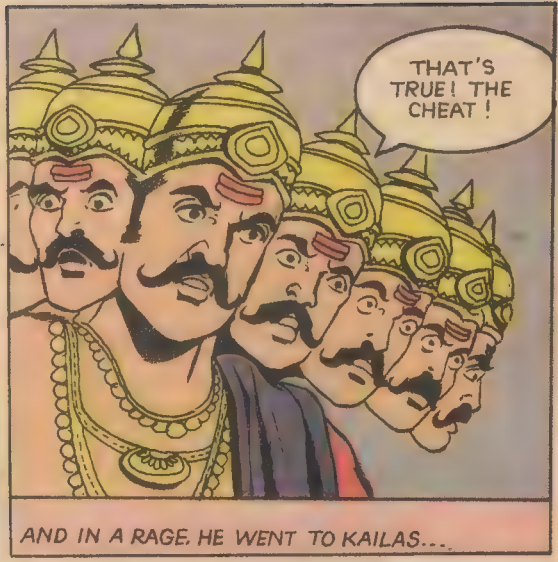
...AND IN WINTER HE IMMERSED HIMSELF NECK-DEEP IN ICE-COLD WATER.

YET HE COULD NOT WIN OVER THE LORD.

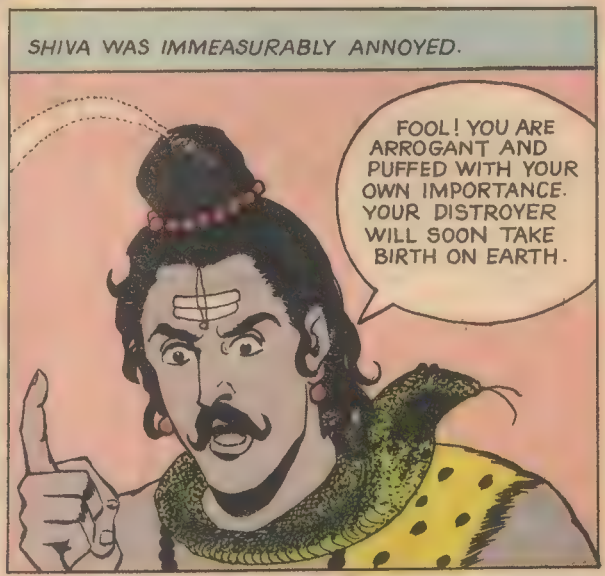
ULTIMATELY, HE STARTED OFFERING HIS HEADS IN WORSHIP, CUTTING THEM OFF ONE BY ONE!
WHEN HE HAD THUS CHOPPED OFF HIS NINE HEADS AND WAS ABOUT TO CUT OFF THE TENTH-
RAVANA, WHAT IS IT YOU WISH FOR? WHY THIS TERRIBLE PENANCE?
LORD, I WISH TO TAKE YOU WITH ME TO LANKA. THIS IS MY BURNING DESIRE.
TAKE THIS LINGA WITH YOU AND ESTABLISH ME IN LANKA. BUT REMEMBER...
... IF YOU SHOULD PUT ME DOWN ANYWHERE ENROUTE, I WILL BECOME ROOTED THERE AND WILL NOT COME WITH YOU TO LANKA.

RAVANA WAS BESIDE HIMSELF WITH JOY. BUT AS HE WALKED THROUGH THE FOREST--
MY BLADDER IS FULL. I MUST RELEIVE MYSELF. BUT WHO WILL HOLD THIS SHIVA-LINGA FOR ME?
JUST THEN HE SPOTTED A COWHERD WHO WAS GRAZING HIS CATTLE IN THE FOREST.
HEY YOU! COME AND HOLD THIS FOR ME.
THE COWHERD HELD THE SHIVA-LINGA BUT AFFTER A WHILE HE FOUND IT BECOMING HEAVY.
I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THIS MUCH LONGER...
HE PLACED IT ON THE GROUND. THERE THE SHIVA-LINGA BECAME ROOTED AND SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME FAMOUS AS THE VAIDYANATHESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA.
RAVANA SAW THIS ON HIS RETURN, BUT WAS NOT ANGRY, FOR HE FELT PROUD THAT THIS JYOTIRLINGA HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BY DINT OF HIS EFFORT.
NEVER MIND IF IT IS HERE. VAIDYANATH IS STILL MY OWN JYOTIR-LINGA.


BUT WHEN HE WAS BACK IN LANKA–
NARAYANA, NARAYANA! SHIVA HAS TRICKED YOU. HE PROMISED TO RESIDE IN LANKA BUT IS NOW IN VAIDYANATH.


THAT'S TRUE! THE CHEAT!
AND IN A RAGE, HE WENT TO KAILAS...

...LIFTED THE MOUNTAIN, AND SHOOK IT TO ITS FOUNDATIONS.


SHIVA WAS IMMEASURABLY ANNOYED.
FOOL! YOU ARE ARROGANT AND PUFFED WITH YOUR OWN IMPORTANCE. YOUR DISTROYER WILL SOON TAKE BIRTH ON EARTH.

RAVANA THEN BECAME SUBDUED. BUT SECRETLY HE WAS ALSO PLEASED, FOR HE KNEW THAT HE WOULD MEET HIS END AT THE LORD'S HANDS!

NAGESHWAR

THERE ONCE LIVED A MERCHANT CALLED SUPRIYA WHO WAS A GREAT DEVOTEE OF LORD SHIVA.

OM NAMAH SHIVAYA !

IT HAPPENED ONCE THAT HE WAS GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE WHEN HIS SHIP WAS ATTACKED BY A DEMON CALLED DARUKA.

DARUKA IMPRISONED ALL THE PILGRIMS AND SUBJECTED THEM TO GREAT TORTURE.

DO NOT BE AFRAID, MY BROTHERS. LORD SHIVA WILL PROTECT US.

THEY ALL SAT DOWN AND PRAYED TOGETHER
OM NAMAH SHIVAYA!
STOP ALL THIS NONSENSE OR ELSE I WILL CHOP OFF YOUR HEADS!
JUST THEN, THERE APPEARED A BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE WITH A BEAUTIFUL GLOWING SHIVA-LINGA IN IT. SUPRIYA AND THE OTHERS WORSHIPPED IT FERVENTLY.
LORD, PROTECT US, YOUR SERVANTS.

SHIVA THEN HIMSELF APPEARED, SHINING WITH A RARE BRILLIANCE.
YOU ARE MY TRUE DEVOTEE, SUPRIYA. HERE IS MY PASHUPAT-ASTRA. DESTROY THE DEMON WITH IT.
AAAAAAHH!
I WILL REMAIN IN THIS PLACE TO BLESS ALL THOSE WHO ARE PURE OF HEART.
THIS JYOTIRLINGA CALLED NAGESHWAR, IS IN DARUKAVANA THAT IS, NEAR DWARAKA IN SAURASHTRA.

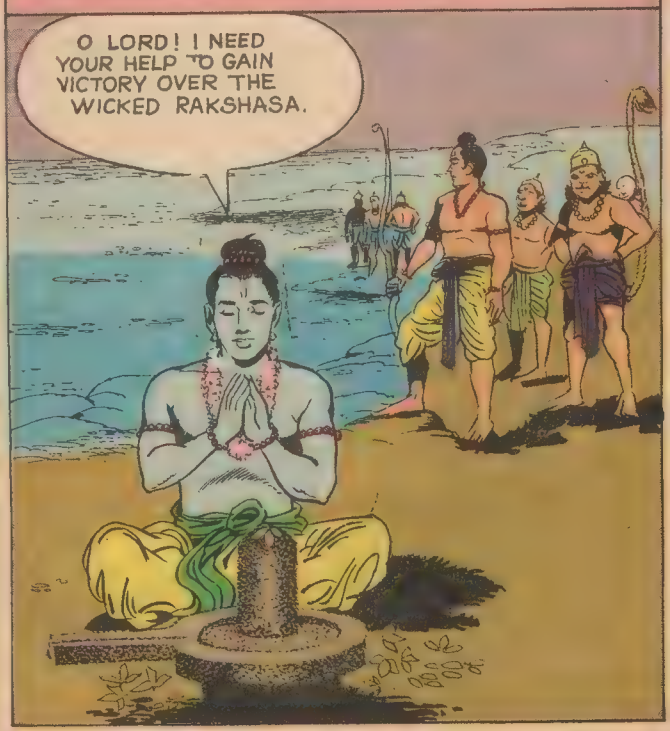
RAMESHWAR

SRI RAMA, WHO WAS AN INCARNATION OF VISHNU, HAD REACHED THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF INDIA IN HIS SEARCH FOR SITA, ALONG WITH SUGRIVA AND HIS ARMY OF MONKEYS.

AS HE CONTEMPLATED UPON THE BEST METHOD OF CROSSING THE OCEAN, HE FELT THIRSTY. A VAANARA BROUGHT HIM SOME WATER.

AS HE WAS ABOUT TO DRINK IT.

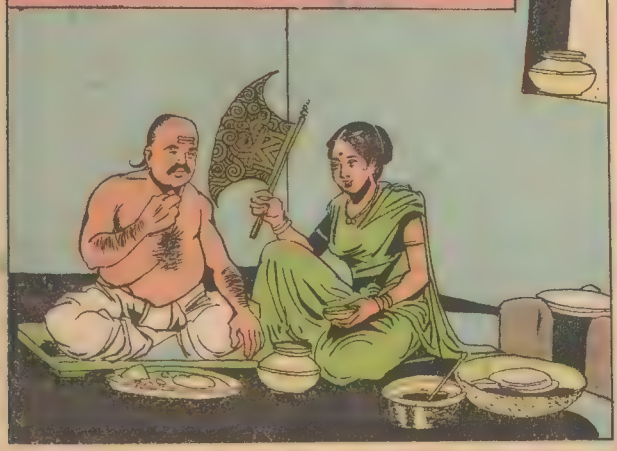
RAMA THEN FASHIONED A SHIVALINGA FROM SAND AND WORSHIPPED IT WITH DEVOTION.



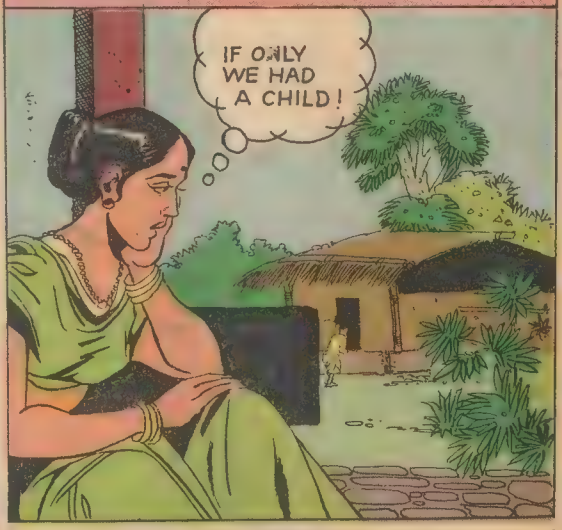
RAVANA TOO, IS LEARNED AND A GREAT DEVOTEE OF YOURS.
BUT I TOO, AM YOUR BHAKTA. SO HELP ME, LORD. JAI SHANKARA! JAI SHIVA!
SHIVA WAS IMMENSELY PLEASED. HE APPEARED THERE ALONG WITH PARVATI AND BLESSED RAMA.
VICTORY WILL BE YOURS!
IF YOU ARE TRULY HAPPY, O SHIVA...
...THEN RESIDE HERE FOR ALL TIME TO COME.
I WILL, RAMA.
THIS JYOTIRLINGA CALLED RAMESHWAR, IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS JYOTIRLINGAS IN THE COUNTRY. SITUATED AT THE SOUTHERNMOST OF INDIA, IT DRAWS PILGRIMS FROM ALL OVER.

GHUSHMESHWAR

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE LIVED A PIOUS BRAHMIN CALLED SUDHARMA. HE HAD A DUTIFUL WIFE CALLED SUDEHA. THEY HAD EVERYTHING IN LIFE BUT NO CHILD.

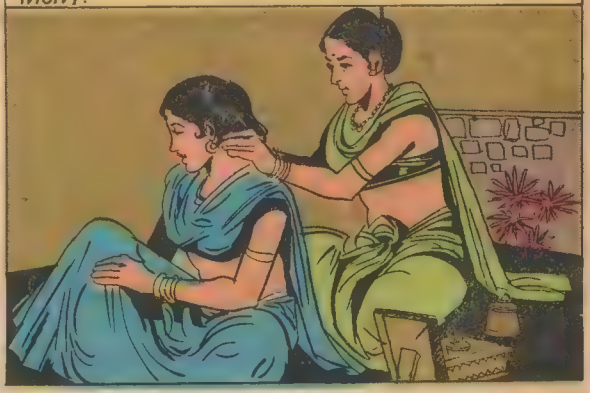


THIS FACT DID NOT BOTHER SUDHARMA. BUT HIS WIFE WAS VERY UNHAPPY AND REMAINED SAD AND MOROSE.

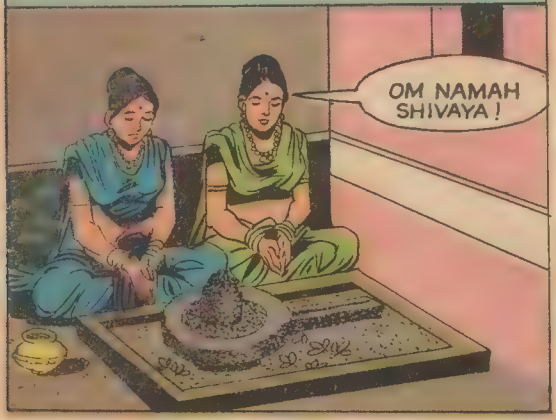


AFTER SEVERAL YEARS, OUT OF SHEER DESPERATION, SHE FORCED A PROTESTING SUDHARMA TO MARRY A SECOND TIME WITH HER OWN YOUNGER SISTER WHOSE NAME WAS GHUSHMA.

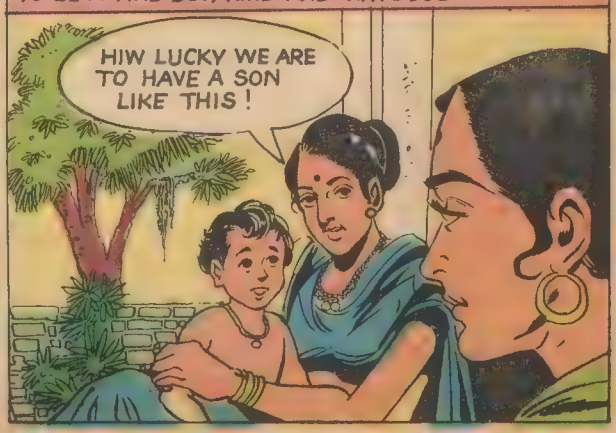
BOTH SISTERS LIVED IN GREAT LOVE AND HARMONY.



SUDEHA TAUGHT GHUSHMA ALL THE CORRECT RETUALS AND METHODS OF WORSHIPPING LORD SHIVA.



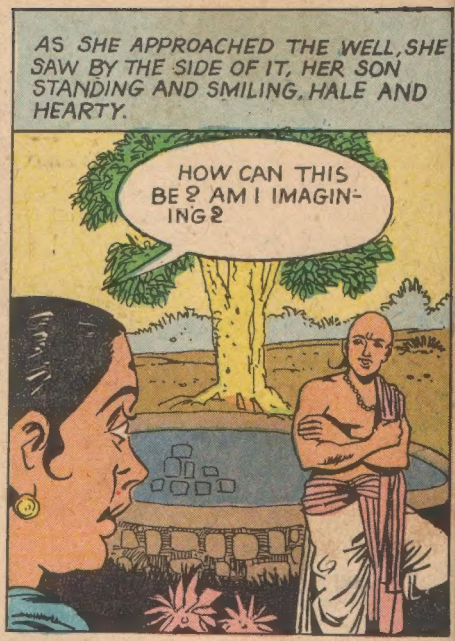
IN TIME, GHUSHMA BORE A SON WHO GREW UP TO BE A FINE BOY, KIND AND VIRTUOUS.



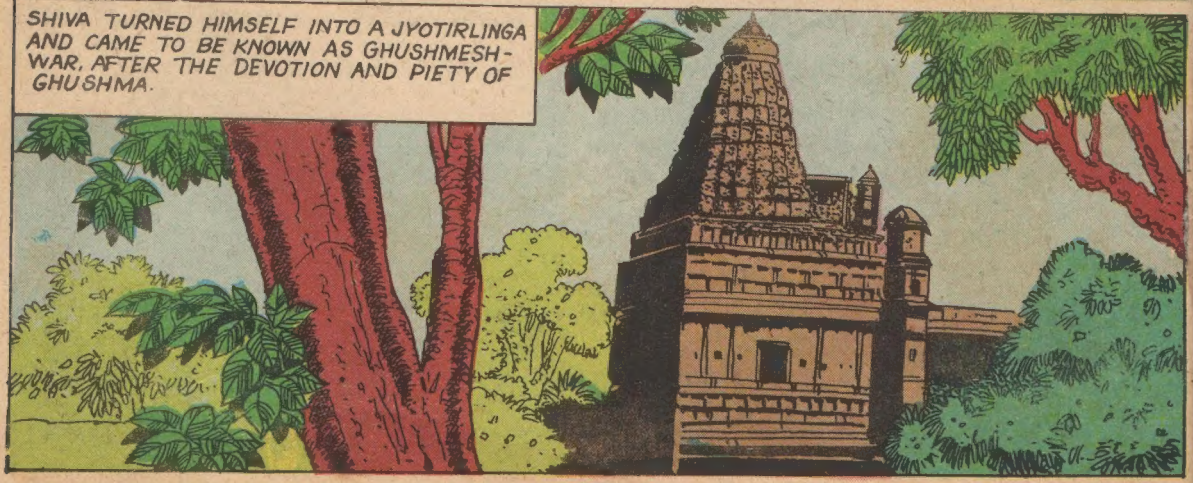
WHEN HE BECAME A YOUNG MAN, HIS PARENTS GOT HIM MARRIED TO A SUITABLE GIRL. IT WAS AT THIS STAGE THAT SUDEHA BEGAN TO FEEL A LITTLE LEFT OUT, AND THE WORM OF JEALOUSY BEGAN EATING INTO HER HEART.
WHY SHOULD SHE BE THE LUCKY ONE ?
AFTER ALL, IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF ME THAT SHE HAS SUCH GOOD FORTUNE.
SO OVER-POWERING BECAME HER JEALOUSY THAT ONE DAY IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT...
..SHE CREPT INTO THE BOY'S BEDROOM AND STABBED HIM WITH A KNIFE.
THERE! THAT WILL KILL HER JOY FOREVER.
THEN SHE CHOPPED HIS LIMBS AND FLUNG THEM INSIDE A WELL.
NEXT MORNING, WHEN THE CRIME WAS DISCOVERED, THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD FELL A-WEEPING.
O WHO HAS DONE THIS VILE DEED!

EXCEPT SUDHARMA AND GHUSHMA.
YOUR WILL BE DONE, O LORD.

HE WHO GIVES HAS EVERY RIGHT TO TAKE AWAY.
AND GHUSHMA WENT ABOUT PERFORMING HER DAILY DUTIES


AS SHE APPROACHED THE WELL, SHE SAW BY THE SIDE OF IT, HER SON STANDING AND SMILING, HALE AND HEARTY.
HOW CAN THIS BE? AM I IMAGINING?

THEN SHE WAS BLESSED BY A VISION OF LORD SHIVA.
YOU HAVE RICHLY DESERVED THIS AND MORE, O GHUSHMA. BUT I WILL DESTROY YOUR EVIL SISTER.
O PLEASE SPARE HER LIFE, LORD, FOR I AM SURE SHE IS SORRY FOR HER MISDEEDS. AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL, PLEASE REMAIN HERE AND BE WORSHIPPED BY YOUR DEVOTEES.


SHIVA TURNED HIMSELF INTO A JYOTIRLINGA AND CAME TO BE KNOWN AS GHUSHMESHWAR, AFTER THE DEVOTION AND PIETY OF GHUSHMA.

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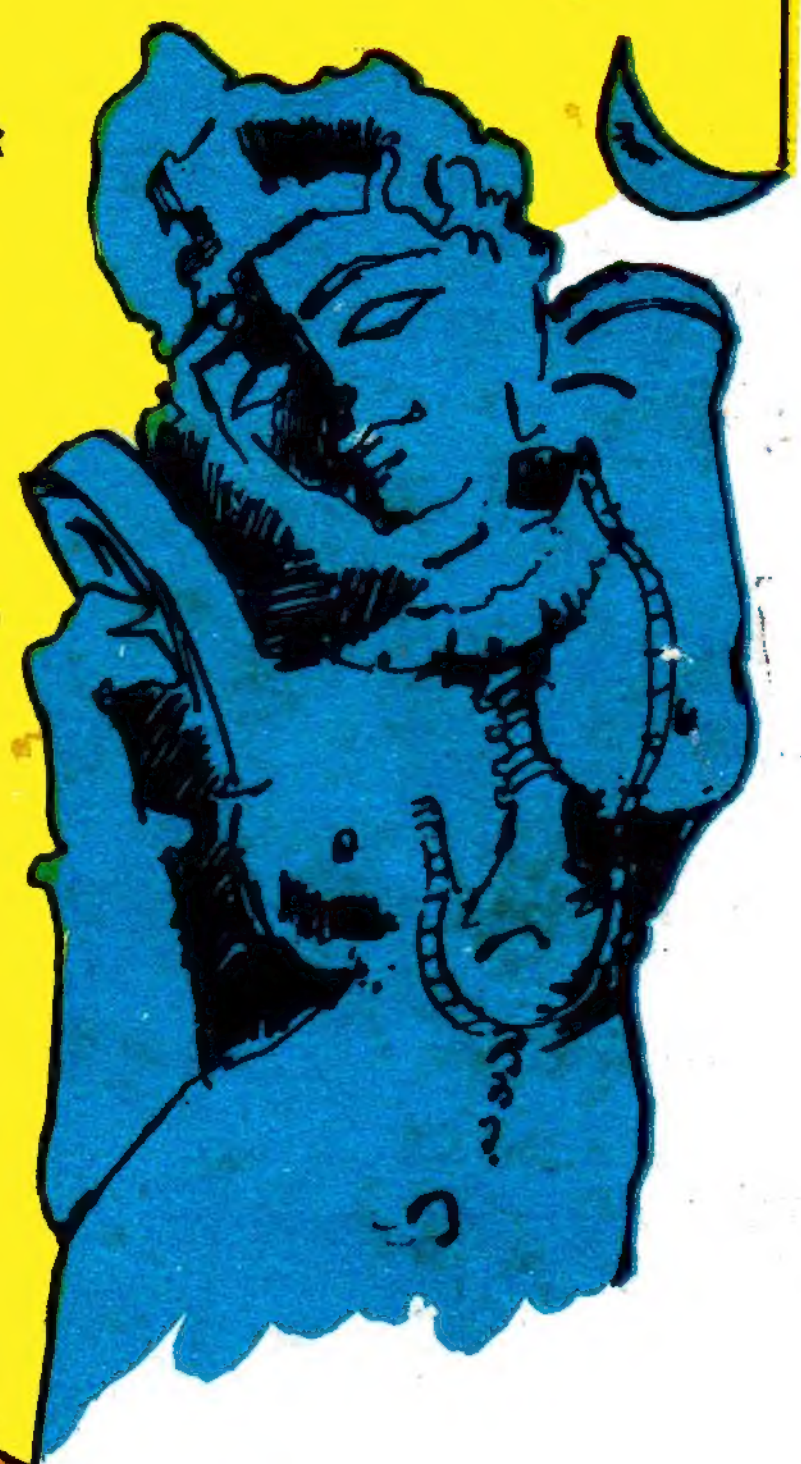

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